

Interagency Wildfire Management Team Meeting Notes November 2, 2005

Note: Due to training for emergencies and support at LANL's Emergency Operations Center, the regularly scheduled meeting of the IWMT on Wednesday, November 16, has been canceled. The next IWMT meeting will be held on November 30 at 9:30 AM.

Doug Tucker (Los Alamos County Fire Department) reported via email that the San Ildefonso prescribed fire was canceled and depending on weather and burning conditions may be rescheduled. Also, Bandelier National Monument has been burning slash piles in preparation for the prescribed fire in the upper Frijoles Canyon. Finally, the prescribed fire in the Valle Toledo, Valles Caldera National Preserve, was started yesterday. This prescribed fire will continue today, and possibly tomorrow.

Craig Martin (Parks Division, Los Alamos County) presented two air photos of Kwage Mesa. The first photo showed the stand density of piñon-juniper woodlands before thinning in 2003 and the second photo showed the post-treatment conditions in 2005. More than 90 percent of the piñon had been killed in the drought. During thinning all of the large piñon were removed and 50 percent of the junipers were removed.

Randy Balice (Ecology Group, LANL) attended the New Mexico Environmental Health Conference and presented on wildfire risk modeling. Scot Johnson also presented on the quantitative classification of wildfire subseasons. Other LANL presenters included Craig Eberhart on measurements of air contamination during the Cerro Grande Fire and Michael Dennis summarizing the air burner treatment of forest thinning waste at LANL.

Gary Kemp (Bandelier National Monument) reported via email that the conditions in the Upper Frijoles Unit's 9a, b and c continue to be too wet to burn. At 9000 feet in elevation with lower temperatures and extensive shading, the time required for drying of the fuels has been increased. It is hoped that there will be an opportunity to conduct this fire later this fall.

The Climate Assessment for the Southwest project (CLIMAS), located at the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, University of Arizona, reports through its October 2005 Outlook that moderate drought continues throughout much of the southwest. The past 30 days were mainly warmer than average. Much of the southwest received below-average precipitation. North-central New Mexico and western Arizona were notable exceptions. Models indicate increased chances of above-average temperatures through April 2006. Forecasters predict slightly increased chances of drier-than-average conditions across most of the region for the fall and early winter. For more information, see <http://www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas/forecasts.html>

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, November 30, at TA-21, Building 210 in the ENV-ECO (Ecology Group) Conference Room (142). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice

(balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.